

**From:** Bushong, Linda (MDE) **On Behalf Of** Leikert, Howard J (MDE)  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 29, 2011 11:54 AM  
**To:** MDE-SchoolNutrition  
**Subject:** Tuesday News from MDE 092711

For some of you, my opening topic may be one you are tired of hearing about but it is important for the schools participating in the Community Eligibility Option (CEO). The other points hopefully have more universal interest.

- 1) Community Eligibility Option – While nearly all applications have been approved at this point, I still hear questions from the field on what qualifies students as directly certified. As this option is based on this information, it is important for all to understand. Directly certified students include only those students that are listed on a direct certification list and are enrolled at the same time. It does not include students who are categorically eligible based on submission of a paper household eligibility application. Therefore, for example, students that were approved for free meals on an application due to their reporting of a case number do NOT count as directly certified. Only those students that show up on the direct certification list (plus homeless, runaway, migrant, Head Start, and foster) are eligible to be counted as directly certified. If you think you may have reported incorrect information on your application, please let us know now so that we can calculate correct percentages for this school year. We will be performing audits of this information and want to make sure accurate information was used in the approved applications.
- 2) We Shall See – I had a phone interview with a newspaper today. During the interview, I was able to tell the reporter about the positive changes that have already been made in school food service and the potential additional changes with the new meal pattern. I talked about how many schools have already begun to serve whole grain foods even though it is not yet required. I told her most schools have been working at eliminating trans fats from their menus and cutting back on sodium. Discussed with her how schools are using items like sweet potato fries (sometimes mixed with regular) to introduce students to “red/orange” vegetables and all the nutrients they provide. Used the example of since 2006, the ordering of USDA soy bean oil (used for deep frying foods) has decreased by 73%. This change represents the huge decrease in fried foods and almost an incalculable decrease in the number of calories served to our students!! Discussed how different people perceive different foods as healthy or unhealthy. Told her that school food service cannot cure the obesity issue alone – society in general, including restaurants, fast food companies, parents, school districts (schools need to sell healthy foods campus wide), industry, and other aspects of our children’s lives need to address this complex issue. Anyhow, I told her the media doesn’t often let the

public know of the positive changes occurring right now in school food service. We shall see what the resulting article covers.

- 3) Farm to School – There are a lot positive aspects of the Farm to School Program. Please see the following link for information and registration on the Celebrating Farm to School webinar being held this Thursday, September 29, 2011, at 3 p.m. EST:  
<http://vovici.com/wsb.dll/s/17fb9g4c886>.

I am wrapping up this week's News. I missed Tuesday AGAIN but will try to get back on track. It has been a busy start to a new school year here at MDE. Hope your first month has gone well!

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